

REMARKS

Claim Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 5, 7-14, 21, 22 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hughes (U.S. 6,403,881). Further, the Examiner has rejected Claims 6 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hughes in view of Bauer et al. (U.S. 6,130,448).

The Examiner has indicated that Claims 2-4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 1 has been amended to include the features recited in previous Claim 2, which has been canceled, and should therefore be allowed. Claims 14 and 21 have been amended to include the flexible plastic tape as recited in previous Claim 2, and as the references do not teach or suggest the flexible plastic tape as recited in these Claims, Claims 14, 21 and all claims depending therefrom should be allowed.

The Primary Examiner (Cunio) in this case was contacted and the Primary Examiner explained that she is not familiar with the case and that the Examiner has been on an extended absence, making it not practical to conduct an interview prior to expiration of the 3-month statutory period. The Primary Examiner suggested that Applicants request that Examiner call Applicants' representative at the number below should the Examiner find that Claims 14 and 21 are not allowable as Amended. Applicants so request.

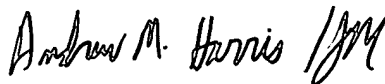
Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' claimed invention is deserving of patent protection because it describes a useful and functioning structure, which is patentably distinguishable over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Applicants respectfully submit that this Amendment, in view of the Remarks offered in conjunction therewith, are fully responsive to all aspects of the objections and rejections tendered by the Examiner in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully submit that they have persuasively demonstrated that the above-identified Patent Application, including Claims 1, 3-14 and 21-26 are in condition for allowance. Such action is earnestly solicited.

It is not believed that this Amendment letter requires any fee, but if there are any fees incurred by this Amendment Letter, please deduct them from our Deposit Account NO. 23-0830.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew M. Harris" followed by a stylized flourish or initials.

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IN THE DRAWINGS

In response to the Examiner's objections, a replacement drawing sheet for Figures 1 and 2 are attached. Applicants submit that the objection to the crosshatch pattern has been overcome by proper cross-hatching. Therefore Applicants submit that the objections to the drawings have been overcome.